

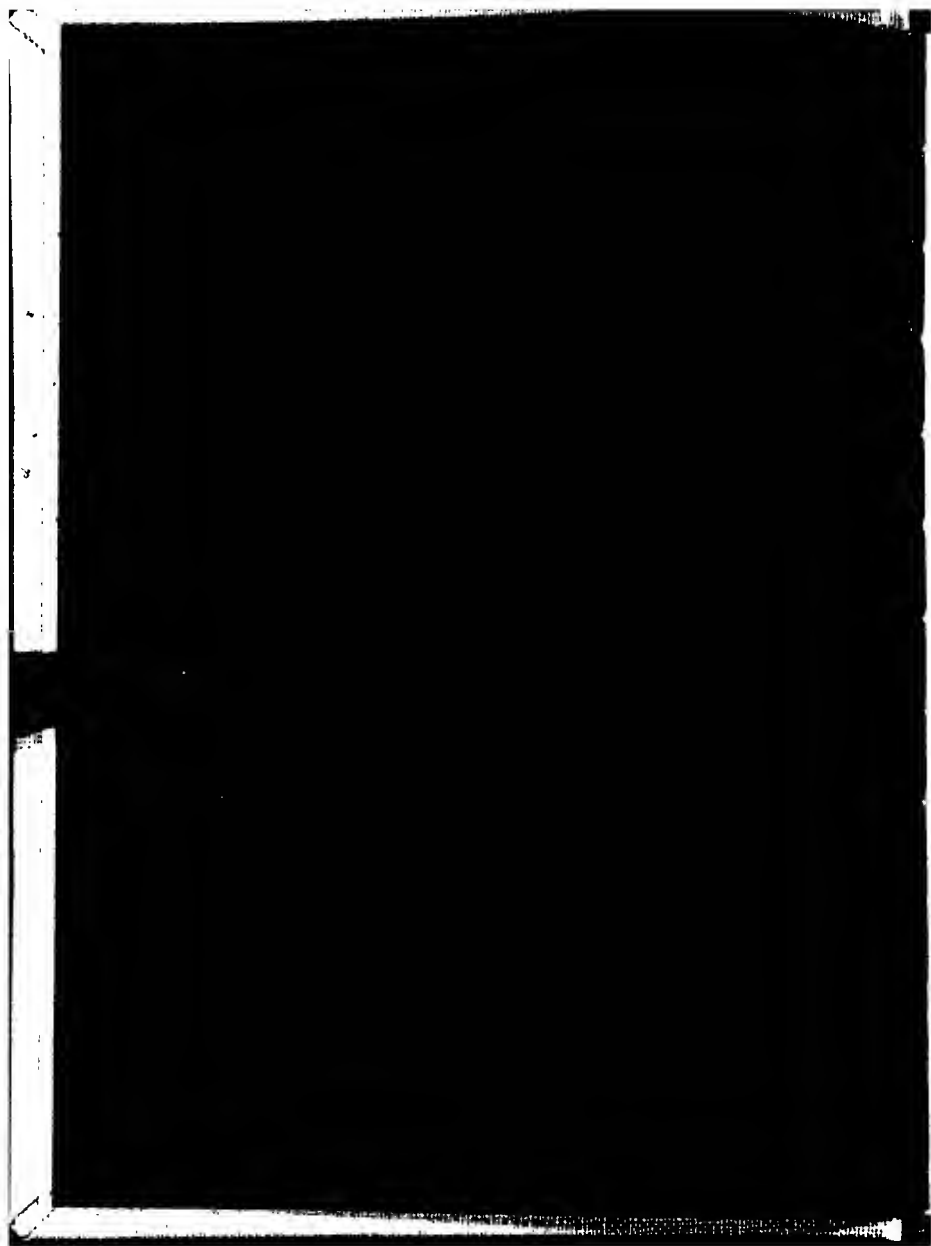
WHITHER MANITOBA

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By J. BITTERICK, M.L.A.

Speech delivered in the Manitoba
Legislature on February 24th, 1937.

Five Cents





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FOREWORD

J. Litterick is the first Communist to take a seat in a Legislative Assembly in Canada. The close attention given his speech by the members of the Legislature, the reception accorded to it in the detailed reports in the Winnipeg daily newspapers indicate that the Communist Party, through its leader and main spokesman in Manitoba is taking its rightful place in the political life of our province.

J. Litterick in his contribution to the debate on the Speech from the Throne, pointed out the situation and the looming dangers, placing the responsibility where it belongs and concretely showing the way to defeat reaction, for victories of progress.

In publishing this speech we have no narrow, party, sectarian aims. The main object of its publication is to generate a broad discussion on the problems facing the people of Manitoba. The many requests already received for copies of the speech indicate the widespread interest in it.

▶ We are mindful of the opponents of the cause of unity,—within and without the labor movement—who are evading the main issues involved; are continuing their attacks upon us, and who insistently carry on the ostrich policies of burying their heads in the sand as a means to avoid the realities of life.

We sincerely hope that the distribution of this pamphlet will strengthen the ties of unity among the progressive people and their organizations. This is its main task.

We are looking forward to the readers' contributions and proposals on the contents of this pamphlet, as well as in the struggle for unity, initiated by our party and dictated by present-day conditions and the needs of the suffering people.

MANITOBA PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE
COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA

Mr. Speaker:

[ET me first of all join with the rest of the members in congratulating you on your election as Speaker of the House. I want to thank you, Sir, for your helpful advice given to me as a new member of the House. I am sure that the relationship between yourself as the Speaker and myself as the lone Communist here, will be characterized by extreme friendliness.

I want also to thank the members of the government for the courtesy they have shown me since the day I was elected, and I assure them of the return of the compliment when the opportunity arises in the not far distant future. I must observe in passing that I cannot express the same sentiments about some of the Government officials. Some of these seem to have a very exaggerated sense of their own importance, and consider that the world is rolled into their small egotistical selves. I will have occasion to refer to such officials more specifically in the course of this session.

I also congratulate the rest of the members, old and new, in their election, particularly the C.C.F.-Labor group and the honorable Mr. Stubbs. Congratulating all the members on their election, I must express my extreme regrets that there are so many Conservatives on the right side of the House.

Had Unity Been Achieved

[I THINK, Mr. Speaker, that had the progressive forces and the progressive organizations of our province thoroughly understood the burning need for unity of the people—as continually advocated by myself and the party to which I belong and of which I am leader in this province,—we would not have had sixteen Conservatives here. And that would be no loss to this House. Had this unity been achieved, we would not be sitting here today discussing a Speech from

the Throne prepared by a Liberal Government. In all probability, we would be discussing a Speech from the Throne prepared by a progressive People's Government.

The honorable leader of the Conservative opposition, Mr. Willis, predicted that within a year the Conservative Party will be the government of this province. The wish is father to the thought. I want to predict that by the time of the meeting of the first session of the 21st legislature, we will have a genuinely progressive government in this province,—a government of which, I sincerely hope, the honorable members of the C.C.F.-Labor group will be the main integral part. This is the immediate aim of the communists. I say this because of the reference already made in this House to communism and to communists. Such references either arise from misunderstanding of communism and the policy of the communists, or else are deliberately aimed at confusing the minds of the hearers and readers of such remarks.

We of the Communist Party are interested in having a government in this province that is progressive; that has for its first care the needs of the people. Only such a government can be really stable.

Composition of House

I WOULD like to make a few observations on the composition of the House. It has been referred to in the press and in political speeches as being ridiculous, and that it will not lead to stable government in the province. I cannot subscribe to either of the two ideas.

What have we got in this House? We have a depleted Liberal group, which is a minority and is the government; and regrettably, an increased Conservative group. Furthermore, we have a larger C.C.F.-Labor group, which is all to the good, and a new Social Credit group, which is also good. I cannot subscribe to the monetary theories of Social Credit. These ideas in no way fit in with communist ideas.

Social Credit's Chief Merit

THE chief merit of Social Credit, in spite of its erroneous theories on finance and credit, lies in the fact that it is an expression of a deep-rooted, although utterly confused, protest of the suffering people against the dominance and heartlessness of financial and monopolistic capitalists, and the desire of the people for a higher standard of living. The presence of the Social Credit group here is a sharp and bitter criticism of a government which completely ignored the needs of the people, as the present Government did.

Then we have the honorable Mr. Stubbs for Winnipeg, who plays a very important part in this House, inasmuch as he has received the largest single vote received by any person in any election in the province of Manitoba. My warm congratulations to Mr. Stubbs. Then we have two Independents, who are really two powder-puff Liberals, who for some reason or other, are too ashamed to openly attach to themselves the label of the Liberal Party. There is myself,—the first Communist to take a seat in this House.

Tories Not Wanted

IS THERE anything outstanding in the composition of this House? What does the composition indicate? First of all the results of the election showed that the people of our province preferred the present composition rather than have a Conservative Government. This I think is clear. Secondly, while the composition may be confusing on the surface, it clearly indicates along what road the people of this province are choosing to travel,—the road of progressive change.

Whoever cares to ignore this, that the people are demanding progressive measures—should not fail to remember that the people have a very decisive way of dealing with those who choose to ignore their needs.

Liberal Program Changed

THE Liberal Government under the leadership of the honorable First Minister, Mr. Bracken, is making some changes in the traditional program of Liberalism in this province. In the speech of the honorable leader of the Conservative group, Mr. Willis, we see almost a revolution. The Conservatives today are espousing the cause of the small man, which I will have occasion to refer to in greater detail later.

In all the speeches that have been made so far, the seriousness of the situation of our province is emphasized, therefore there can be no excuse for this House to dilly-dally with problems.

I as a Communist, and the Communist Party, as such, are seriously concerned over the gravity of the situation of our people. As a member of this House, I want to contribute my part in finding the best ways and means to end this situation; to remove this load of debts and other burdens that sit on the shoulders of our people, and to assist in materially improving their circumstances. Disappointing as it may be to some, who would desire it to be otherwise, I have no intention of being an oppositionist for opposition's sake. I have no desire to sit here merely to observe, criticize, expose, and oppose.

For Constructive Program

IT IS MY intention and main purpose in this House to serve the people as constructively as humanly possible; in unity with other progressives, to bring forward a constructive program that will help the people of our province to throw off burdens which oppress them; and bring to them the prospects of some measure of prosperity of which they are robbed. Such was the program on which I fought the election and was elected. Such is the program on which I stand in this House. As a member of this House, I want

to contribute my share in working out the necessary solutions to the problems of the people of Manitoba.

I know this may sound rather strange and disappointing to those who have had preconceived and misguided ideas about communists,—those who, like the honorable Attorney-General, say that the communists are a bunch of trouble-makers, whose sole aim is to be a thorn in the side of the government,—whose sole idea is revolution. Such ideas are entirely erroneous, and in no way describe the attitude, policy, and program of the Communist Party. Such ideas are intended to create false conceptions concerning the Communist Party.

End Dilly-Dallying

WHEN THE Speech from the Throne was made, I debated with myself whether it would be advisable to bring forward a motion that all debate be eliminated and that the House proceed immediately to the business of **saving the province of Manitoba for its people**. The seriousness of the situation of our people demands immediate attention and action. It demands that an end be put to the dilly-dallying and the sewing-circle politics that have characterized the policies of the Government of Manitoba.

The gravity of the situation, particularly in regard to debts and finances of our province, demands that we tackle the problems of meeting the needs of the people without delay, not after some commission, that is yet to be appointed, has chewed over them for a number of months. The situation was aggravated by the fact that Mr. Bracken and his cabinet have delayed the calling of this Assembly, whose meeting is long overdue. However, I decided against making such a motion, for the following reasons:

Reasons for Debate

FIRST of all the honorable First Minister, Mr. Bracken, has placed before us the alternative that there will be



no business done by this House until we have accepted the Speech from the Throne. He would want the vote on the Speech from the Throne to then become in reality a vote of confidence or non-confidence. Under this circumstance, we would be faced with three alternatives: 1) a government under the leadership of the honorable leader of the Conservative Party, Mr. Willis; 2) a coalition of the Liberals and Conservatives; or 3) another election. None of these is desirable; either of the alternatives at the present time would result in the advance of reaction. In the meantime, nothing would be done for the people of Manitoba—they would remain the sufferers.

Secondly, because some people in this House seem to have as their main purpose being an official opposition. If the progressive people within and without the House take decisive steps, the situation will considerably change. Therefore I appeal to the progressives to unite and bring about such a condition in the Manitoba legislature.

► My third consideration against attempting to eliminate a prolonged, and to my mind unnecessary debate, was that I did not wish to create the impression that the sole aim in life of the lone communist in this House was to "oust Bracken." That is not the most important question at the moment. The progressive people of Manitoba will remove Bracken in due course, when they are ready to replace him with a genuinely progressive government: most decidedly not a Conservative Government. I am not interested in sharpening the situation in this province. On the contrary, to find ways and means to take away that sharpness and to effect a satisfactory solution for the people is my utmost concern.

Will Vote For Speech

RISKING the shock to some people, I want to declare that it is my intention to vote for the Speech from the Throne. The honorable Mr. Willis might assume that there is an-

other strange combination arising in the House. I refuse to be guided by the considerations of Mr. Willis. In this decision I am guided by the same considerations that caused me not to move the elimination of this debate:—the consideration of the needs of the people.

Because I propose to vote for the Speech from the Throne, it does not mean that the honorable Mr. Bracken has the right to assume for a moment that he will get my full and unqualified support. I am in sharp disagreement with the Government policy. I have many harsh things to say to them, and I propose to say them in a very harsh way.

Bracken Responsible

THE responsibility for the situation in the province must be placed where it belongs. Who is responsible for the increase in the burden of debts of our people? Who bows to the will and greedy desires of the bankers and rich bondholders? Who is responsible for the terrible social conditions arising out of unemployment in this province? Who is responsible for cutting down the social services at a time when more of them are needed? Who refused to take necessary steps to prevent mass deterioration of the health of our people? Who is it that shamefacedly talks about giving the youth a future—and in reality condemns them to work in degrading camps, or exiles them to the farms to work for five dollars to seven dollars and fifty cents per month?

Who is responsible for the high taxation—for the iniquitous 2% Wage Tax? Who refuses to abolish this vicious legislation in spite of the insistent demands of the people? Who is it that taxes the poor and exempts the rich? Who is it that permits the continuation and growth of destructive government bureaucracy? The present government of this province, and the honorable First Minister as the leader of this government, bear the full responsibility for the situa-

tion. It is on these things the unsavory record of the government is built up, and for which it is answerable to the people. These are the things that the people of this province and the progressive groups in this House demand must be changed. The government must change if it wants to continue as a government.

Choice Rests With Bracken

I WISH to declare that if the government is going to play ball with the people of this province, and seriously try to assist them, we will play ball with the government. Not otherwise. If the government is going to bring down a program that is intended to benefit the masses of the people of this province, and not to curry favor with the bondholders and the speculators that the honorable Mr. Willis seems to be so disturbed about, then we will play ball with the government.

Unless the Liberal Party of the province is prepared to adopt a progressive program that has for its immediate aim the satisfying of the immediate and urgent needs of the people, then the onus of whether the First Minister and his government will continue in office rests on themselves. They must assume that responsibility, and be prepared to take the consequences. The people of this province want a government that has courage. They want a government that is bold in its program, methods, and proposals. Can we say that about the present government of this province? Most decidedly not!

What Does Bracken Fear?

THE speech of the First Minister expresses a realization of the serious situation existing in our province. But apparently he does not comprehend, or perhaps does not want to comprehend the trend of events in this province. This being so, he is not prepared to take the necessary steps to correct the situation. His speech is full of hesitations,

timidity almost bordering on fear—fear of dealing with things in the bold way the situation calls for.

What does Mr. Bracken fear? Is Mr. Bracken afraid that the people of this province will turn on him if he places their needs first and above all others? He need not be afraid of this because the people are friendly to those who safeguard their interests. Is Mr. Bracken afraid of what the bankers might say or do? He need not fear that, because the power of the people can be made greater than that of the bankers. The honorable First Minister is no fool (and the honorable leader of the Conservative group, Mr. Willis, has conceded that). Nor is he blind.

Poverty Rampant

IN ORDER to appreciate what is wrong in this province, all one must do is to take a walk through the heart of Winnipeg, to see the gathering slums in the centre of the city, to see those infested holes that the landlords are demanding exorbitant rents for. Let Mr. Bracken take a trip along the country roads, and see the ramshackle shacks that pretend to be homes. Let him go down to the southwest corner of this province to see the farmers walking in their bare feet behind the plough, because they cannot buy shoes; to see their wives and children with their feet wrapped in sackcloth, as if they were the sinners.

Let him hear the stories of the people who have been unemployed for years, of their struggle during all these years to try to feed their families. Let him see what the "magnificent" amount of relief given to the rural people in this province does for them. Let him watch how families with one to ten children are compelled to live on five to ten dollars a month. If, having listened to and seen these things, he still does not feel that the needs of the people come first, then let him resign and turn the government over to those who are best able to appreciate and understand these things;

who can follow a bold policy—the progressive groups and individuals in this House.

“Quit Tories”

IT IS quite evident from the speech of the First Minister that he has not yet made up his mind whether he is going to align himself with the forces of progress in this House and Province, following a progressive program, or whether he is going to invite the honorable leader of the Conservative opposition to cross the floor, and form a reactionary coalition.

I do not know whether Mr. Bracken will accept advice from a communist—it is offered in all sincerity and responsibility of my position.

Mr. Bracken: If it is good, I'll accept it.

Mr. Litterick: My advice is to drop forthwith the question of unity with the Conservative Party. The day the First Minister decides to have a coalition with the Conservatives will be the beginning of a reign of reaction in Manitoba. It will be the doom of the Liberal Party, for it is bound to go down with the Conservative Party. The progressive people will see to that. The choice rests with the First Minister. Does he stand for progressive action in this province, or will he once again follow reaction?

Willis Exposed

THE honorable leader of the Conservative Party, Mr. Willis, told us that the government is reactionary. This remark was made towards the end of his speech. But during the preceding hour he was busy telling us that there was little in the program of the government that he did not agree with, and that it was in reality the program of the Conservative Party. He accused Mr. Bracken of actually stealing his platform. If the present government, having stolen planks of the Conservative platform, is too reactionary, we

can conclude only that the Conservatives are also too reactionary for this House. Then we had better dispose of both.

Main Danger

IS THE Liberal Party on the same plane as the Conservative Party? It is necessary that we draw a line of distinction, that we should differentiate between the Liberals and the Conservatives. The main danger to the people of this province, as well as of Canada as a whole, comes from the extremely reactionary section of the capitalist class, that section which has for its representative and mouth-piece of its policies, the Conservative Party.

Covering up with a demagogic appeal for the small man, the Conservatives are furthering their program of attack on the democratic rights of the people. We cannot, however, regard the Liberal Party under the leadership of Mr. Bracken as a barrier to reaction. Nor can Mr. Bracken be considered as a defender of the democratic rights of the people of this province and a promoter of social legislation tending to improve their conditions.

Bracken Retreats

MR. BRACKEN retreats before the attacks of reaction, not only from the Conservatives, but also from the reactionary forces within his own party. This explains why he refuses to take a decisive stand on the question of the scaling down of debts, on reduction of interest rates, and his timidity on social legislation. He is toying with the idea of a coalition with the Conservatives.

The Progressive-Liberal Government should drop the title "progressive" and remain just "liberal" because it is not a progressive government, although there are stirrings of certain elements of progressiveness. The latter is a result of the pressure of the people.

Tories Bearers of Reaction

BUT merely opposing Mr. Bracken for opposition's sake can only help Mr. Willis. We direct our main fire against the Conservatives. Another Tory Government in this province would leave the people at the mercy of reaction, the fifty big shots of Canada. The honorable Mr. Willis refers to his party as being a new and re-organized party. The Conservative Party today clears the decks for the introduction of fascism in this country; it has become the carrier of the disease of fascism.

The people of this province have not forgotten the record of the Conservative Party. They have not forgotten that its leader is still Mr. Bennett of the "end unemployment in three months" fame. It is still fresh in the people's minds that the Tory leader, Mr. Bennett, while in office, adopted the policy of the "Iron Heel of Ruthlessness" towards all and any progressive movements in this country. The people do not want a repetition of those things. The people of this province do not want a party that advocates tarring and feathering of trade union members and organizers.

The people have not forgotten the last Conservative Government of Manitoba that tried to steal the Parliament Building, brick by brick, but could not carry it away.

A Member (from the Tory benches): Let's talk about the present.

Mr. Litterick: I understand the uneasiness of the honorable member when we refer to the past of his party. But the people of Manitoba are still paying. No matter how much the Conservatives would like this erased from their minds, they cannot forget.

We point to the reactionary direction of the Conservative Party and warn the people not to be deceived into accepting their stage appeal and sudden interest in the small man. The real essence of the Conservative policy is reaction.

That is why we proclaim that to prevent the Conservatives from coming to power is our first and foremost task.

Mr. Willis: That is a big task.

Mr. Litterick: A big task—true enough; but a task that we will nevertheless carry through. This task is not mine alone. It is the common task of the progressive people in this House and province.

Who are the progressives? The progressives in this House, Mr. Speaker, are the C.C.F.-Labor group, under the leadership of the honorable Mr. Farmer; the Social Credit group led by the honorable Mr. Fox; the honorable Mr. Stubbs; and myself. These are the progressives. And let there be no mistake about that.

Speech from the Throne

I WILL now pass to the Speech from the Throne and the reply of the honorable First Minister. It is perhaps a sign of our times, that for the first time in years the Speech enumerates a number of proposals that touch some of the problems of the people. I will deal with only a few of these.

The financial situation of our province is of the utmost gravity. The situation can be summed up as follows: every man, woman and child in Manitoba owes \$666.00 in Dominion, Provincial and Municipal debt. This does not include the millions of dollars in mortgage debt owing to the banks and mortgage corporations. Millions of dollars are extracted from our people yearly by exorbitant interest charges, to maintain these debts.

This burden of debt and particularly the interest rates is draining our resources. It brings poverty, suffering and indescribable hardships to our people. Interest payments are met, and social services are reduced. A heavier burden of taxation is imposed.

Social Services Slashed

I ET US see, Mr. Speaker, what happened to our Social Services. The contribution of the Government towards

the care and training of the blind has been reduced. These unfortunate people are to endure a drearier existence because the government's policy is to meet interest payments in full first, before considering the suffering blind.

Or take for instance the case of the grants to the hospitals and for public health services to the people. The social consequences of eight years of industrial and agrarian crisis are met with reduced assistance from the government.

Government grants for educational purposes were reduced from \$2,439,000 in 1931 to \$1,734,000 in 1936.

I could go through the list of social services the estimates for which have been scraped to the bone. To Mr. Bracken and his government, the lining of the pockets of the rich bondholders is of more importance than the health of the people. During the past years our people suffered mass unemployment. The incomes of the workers and farmers were reduced. Their standard of living took a sharp drop. The bondholders have collected six and one-half million dollars yearly in interest and have grown richer on the poverty of the people.

Why Wait?

HOW IS the government proposing to meet this situation?

Mr. Bracken is opposed to what he is pleased to term an arbitrary cutting down of the interest rates. The government cannot break faith with its creditors, he claims. A commission to investigate the whole financial set-up of the province is proposed as the way out. "The business of the province now was to prepare an unanswerable case for the commission" (Winnipeg Free Press report on Bracken's speech).

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have had commissions and conferences of so-called experts before. These commissions have met, talked, called witnesses, talked some more, and after some months, brought in a report which was placed in the archives and conveniently forgotten. Commissions

have come and gone, but the conditions of our people become worse. Can we expect any more from such a Commission as proposed by Mr. Bracken?

It is deception of the crudest sort to make believe that a commission can and will bear fruit. I am not opposed to a commission. Let this commission come and do its work when it is appointed. But why all this dilly-dallying and delay?

Let this Legislative Assembly assume its responsibility and decide what is to be done now. Mr. Bracken spoke about responsible government. But a government that passes the buck to a non-existent commission and itself does nothing about the matter is not a responsible government.

People's Interests First

WE SHOULD state our position clearly and boldly, say what we propose to do, and proceed to do it. We must declare that we will brook no interference from anyone, because we have the people's interests at heart. We were elected by the people to defend and uphold their interests. It is our job and our responsibility. Only a government which will do this will be really a responsible government. Only such a government will win and maintain the support of the people.

Some of the reasons given by the First Minister against an "arbitrary" reduction of the interest rates are that all the bondholders cannot be found, and that there are many small bondholders, whose incomes will be jeopardized by such actions.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the First Minister need not lose any sleep about not being able to find the bondholders. First of all we know that he found quite a few of them the other day, when he wanted to speak to them. Secondly, if it were made publicly known that Manitoba intended to reduce the interest rates, the bondholders would very soon



find us. We can safely leave it to them to make their presence known.

There are two distinct groups of bondholders: a small group which owns the greatest part of the bonds, and a larger group that owns a small number. The First Minister is trying to hide behind the small bondholders to conceal his unwillingness to reduce the interest rate.

Cut Interest in Half

THE PEOPLE to be dealt with are those few bondholders who own and control the majority of the bonds of this province. We must say to them: "You have had your pound of flesh. Our people have paid enough in untold hardships and sufferings. The time is long overdue for you to pay your share." That should be the position of the government.

This is no time for timid and hesitant proposals about preparing "an unanswerable position" for a commission as yet to come. Hesitantly begging the financiers for mercy is no solution. Bold and decisive action is the crying need of the hour. The welfare of our people comes first and foremost.

- We can do something for our people now. Let us cut the interest rate by one half and we will save about three million dollars a year. Sufficient money can thus be created to wipe out the 2% wage tax, and have an additional \$1,800,000 to improve the social services of our province.

We can take steps at the same time to protect the small bondholders who, trying to eke out a low income, have put their meagre savings into government bonds. These, however, are not the people who have the province by the throat.

Protect Small Incomes

THE government through Mr. Bracken declared that it is not going to increase taxation. That is a very broad

statement, but it does not take into consideration the differentiation between taxpayers. I am unalterably opposed to any increased taxation of the people with small incomes. I am in favor of a steep reduction of the tax burden imposed upon them.

The province needs money and I propose that we take it from the source that can supply it. Let us get it from those people who are well qualified and able to pay. There are people who extract huge profits from our province, but are evading payment of taxes by having their residence elsewhere. These people must be made to pay their share.

The large corporations who exploit the wealth and resources of our province and who collect enormous sums in dividends must carry the main load of taxation. This will enable us to lift the heavy weight of taxation from the shoulders of the people with low incomes. Only such can be considered a sane taxation policy.

There is a disgraceful situation in regard to taxation. A gigantic mining corporation operating in the constituency represented by Mr. Bracken, made a profit of nearly two million dollars in the past year. The government pays a subsidy of \$100,000 a year to the railway which services this corporation, yet all the taxes paid by this corporation to the government for the past year amounted to fifty-two thousand dollars. Is this proper taxation? It is nothing short of discrimination.

These are the kind of corporations that extract the wealth from this province. We should take steps to tax wealth at its source to provide for our people the things they need. Let us double the Corporation Tax and increase the taxes on incomes in the higher brackets, and the income of our province will be increased by two million dollars.

Three million dollars by cutting the interest rates by one-half, and two million dollars by increasing taxation on the rich, will give us an additional five million dollars.

There are ways and means of extracting the wealth that belongs to the people but which has gone into the hands of these financial morons. Let us accept these means, instead of continuing to tell our people that we cannot do anything until we have a commission.

Abolish Wage Tax

THE WAGE tax is the most ignominious piece of legislation that has been passed by any government outside of Germany and Italy, and should be abolished forthwith. In most countries, the taxpayer has the privilege of deciding how and when he is going to pay the tax. But in Manitoba this is not the case when the wage earner is concerned. Mr. Bracken showed how to collect a tax, on incomes not yet earned. This is not collecting an income tax—it is a hold-up.

It is compulsory taxation of the worst form. The sooner this vicious piece of legislation is eliminated the better. The degrading features of this tax must be eliminated. The changes in the exemptions the government proposes are not enough. The Act must be repealed.

Debt-Strangled Municipalities

THE SPEECH from the Throne indicates that something is going to be done to assist the municipalities. We do not know what will be proposed, but assistance is welcome and urgent. The situation in the municipalities is similar to that of the province. They are overburdened with debts.

Let me cite some facts to illustrate how bad the situation is. The municipality of St. James, just outside of Winnipeg, owes more than its total assessment roll. The municipality is bankrupt. Under such conditions, how can this municipality get out of this situation, unless the Assembly takes drastic measures in coming to its assistance?

The amount paid in interest by the municipalities is enormous. Take for instance the city of Brandon. In 1913

a bond was issued to the amount of \$13,000 for the purpose of building a library. The actual amount of cash received was \$11,440. At the end of 1935 the city had paid in interest for this single issue the total of \$14,300; more than the amount of money actually received. It is still to pay \$18,200 in interest and principal, and there is still no library in Brandon.

Mr. Queen: This is not the only case.

Mr. Litterick: Of course not. It is only typical of the situation of our municipalities. That is only one of many examples.

Legislation should be brought forward in this House that will enable the municipalities to meet their problems along the lines I proposed for the Provincial Government to meet its own.

Farmers' Income Slumps

THE PEOPLE of the countryside are as badly off as those in the cities, if not worse. Here are some very interesting figures showing the depth of the poverty that exists among the farmers. The drop in the income of the farmers in our province is as follows:

1928	\$150,000,000
1929	117,000,000
1930	89,000,000
1931	56,000,000
1932	54,000,000
1933	57,000,000
1934	73,000,000
1935	58,000,000

In 1936 (the estimated income is).... 80,000,000

There are hundreds of farmers in the drought area who are asking assistance from the government. Many of them want to be taken out of this area, where even the grasshoppers cannot get a feed, and re-establish elsewhere. Their appeals have been ignored completely.

The cancellation of the debts of the people in the drought area means very little to them. Nobody can collect a debt in this area. There is nothing left to collect. It is not sufficient to cancel debts. These people want an opportunity to make a living. They want to be productive citizens of this province, not public charges.

Can this situation be allowed to remain as it is? For how much longer will the government turn a deaf ear to the pleas of despair of the people in the drought area? The people in the drought area are not going to tolerate much longer living as they are. They will come hammering at the door of the government. Their demands must be met.

Relief and Seed Needed

DURING the election campaign I heard Mr. Bracken make a statement to the effect that there is no one starving in this province. I wonder if Mr. Bracken would like to attend a meeting of relief recipients in any part of this province, say among those in his own constituency. Let Mr. Bracken tell these people who have been receiving five and ten dollars per month to maintain large families that there is no one starving in this province. I would not like to be in his shoes. Such statements are the height of utter nonsense.

I could give you case after case of people who have come to my office appealing for assistance: people who have walked miles in cold weather to get into Winnipeg to beg from their government a few dollars to buy flour to make bread for their children. These people left Winnipeg with a few dollars, but not from the government. All they got from the government was a callous "no."

The Speech from the Throne does not indicate any big changes in this regard. If the government wants to preserve the good-will of the people, it is necessary for it to introduce legislation aiming to eliminate this situation.

• We must establish a uniform and higher level of relief, by raising the rate and allowances throughout the province.

The honorable leader of the Conservative opposition and the honorable leader of the C.C.F.-Labor group have dealt with the question of seed. The farmers must get the seed now, before it is too late to be of any use.

Labor Legislation

LABOR legislation in our province needs a great deal of improvement. It is necessary to amend the Compensation and the Minimum Wage Acts, as well as other labor legislation. There are a number of categories of workers who do not come within the scope of the Compensation Act or the Minimum Wage Act at present.

These workers are at the mercy of unscrupulous employers. These workers are compelled to work long hours, for very low wages. The agricultural laborer, the casual worker, the employees in hospitals and such institutions should come under these Acts. This will help to eliminate the disgraceful conditions they work under. Greater control should be exercised over those employers who seem to think that it is their special privilege to violate the Minimum Wage Act.

Guarantee Workers' Rights

THE SPEECH from the Throne indicates that legislation will be brought forward to "prevent strikes and lockouts in industry." Having some knowledge of the government, I do not like this formulation. What is needed is legislation assuring the workers of fair wages and conditions and the right to collective bargaining to protect the interests of the employees.

It would be interesting to compare the figures of the number of lockouts and strikes in the past year. The workers do not want strikes for the sake of striking. If the

government will provide machinery to protect their interests, they will welcome it. Strike action is forced on the workers by the greed and inhuman stubbornness of the employers.

In the city of Winnipeg there has been a strike on for the past seven months. Fur workers are on strike for the right to organize. If proper legislation were in existence, there would be no need for this strike. The unreasonable stubbornness of the employers would have been broken down long ago. The contribution of the government to the settlement of this strike has not been of any great value.

In view of this fact, and being mindful of the infamous activities of the First Minister in the Flin Flon strike, a statement should be made by him, stating his views and the position of the government on the question of workers' right to organize into trade unions of their own choice, and to collective bargaining.

Right to Strike

I DO NOT want to see the workers' right to strike taken away from them. That, in my opinion, is an inviolable right of the working class. I will fight and oppose any attempt to take this right away from them.

► In the course of my activities in the labor movement I at one time occupied the position of the National acting-secretary of the Workers' Unity League. I occupied the position at the time when R. B. Bennett had thrown Tom Ewen into jail under Section 98. This organization has since merged with the trade unions of the American Federation of Labor.

The workers' attitude to strikes is known to me. I am not in favor of strikes for strikes' sake. Strikes are one of the weapons of the working class which they are loath to use, but which of necessity must be used at some time. The strike weapon must be used, when all other means are exhausted, or when no other course to defend labor's rights is apparent. There must be no barrier placed in the path

of the working people in the exercising of that elementary right.

Single Men Mishandled

THERE cannot be too much said about the disgraceful mishandling of the problem of the Single Men. I will merely touch on this briefly, as I intend to deal with this problem in greater detail on some other occasion during this session. The single men do not come under what is termed unemployables. They are most desirous to work.

The men have appealed to the authorities time and again. The present King Government presented them with a farm placement scheme. This is the alternative to the relief camps, which were supposed to be abolished. But these camps still exist in this province.

Bad and degrading as the relief camps were, the Farm Placement scheme is worse. The unemployed single men are exiled, with prospects for the future darker than ever. The scheme offers no solution to our youth and to unemployed single men. We must give our youth work, recreation, and prospects for a bright future.

The scheme, intended to get rid of the homeless unemployed in the cities and towns, only served to worsen the unemployed situation in the countryside. According to many reports received by me from a number of farmers, I can state that some, who can well afford to hire help, have either refrained from doing so, or have fired their help, replacing them with men under the Farm Placement scheme at much lower wages. Thus a considerable number of qualified agricultural workers were thrown out of employment. Such things are created by capitalism.

The Farm Placement scheme must be condemned. Its compulsory features are repulsive. It offers no solution. It only further aggravates the situation.

The relief camps and the Farm Placement scheme also served to increase the contemptuous and brutal treatment

of the men in the city. Much has been said about greedy employers taking advantage of mass unemployment to reduce wages. Such employers are further encouraged by the government, which takes full advantage of present-day conditions to pay rates below the minimum wage. In such public works, as for example in St. Frances, the government has again reduced the wages four cents below the minimum wage.

Youth Claims

THE GROWING generation of our youth must also be taken care of. Thousands of young men and women are living with their parents, destitute. What future awaits them? Apparently nothing but farm placement schemes, an odd day's work, relief camps, soup kitchens, and the like. Is that all our youth deserves?

The present government stands condemned for its gross callousness in meeting the problems of the young people as well as for its general disregard for unemployment and rural relief.

Posing with lily-white innocence, the government asks the question, where is all the money to come from. I have pointed out that there is plenty of money to be gotten from those who have it. If the government had not followed an extremely nearsighted policy, we might not be seeing the gross phenomena of the relief bill going up, and general living conditions and health of our people going down.

Public Works Needed

TO ALLEVIATE the present situation arising out of unemployment, to cut down the direct relief bill, the government should embark on a public works project that would provide work for the unemployed, both in the city and country.

The statements of some politicians, coming from the ranks of the party led by the honorable First Minister, that

"the unemployed are lazy"—are nothing else but slanders, intended to alienate public support, and attempts to justify the government's sewing-circle politics. The unemployed want work with decent wages. A public works project will reduce the ranks of the unemployed. It will be a progressive step in improving conditions generally.

Mr. Bracken, during the election campaign, stated that he would not indulge in any public works scheme unless it was self-liquidatory. To my mind, a public works scheme to clear the slums of Winnipeg, to build homes throughout the prairie, to build hospitals and other such institutions, wherever they are needed, to build new and better roads, to rebuild the drought area and make it into a real productive part of our province—is very much self-liquidatory. The urgency of such measures and undertakings cannot be over-emphasized. If we are to live up to our responsibilities as representatives of the people, we must proceed with such projects at once.

Health Insurance

WE ALSO need a Provincial Health Insurance scheme.

The health of our people is of primary concern. The past seven years of crisis and depression has seriously impaired the health of the people. It is imperative that steps be taken immediately to prevent any further impairment and to raise the level of the health of the people. An insurance scheme that is all-embracing will be a step in the proper direction. I intend to bring forward a resolution along these lines for the consideration of the House.

Winnipeg Merits More Seats

THE previous speakers in this debate all referred to the question of democracy. I wish to make just a remark on this subject. There is to my mind a great deal of unfairness in respect to representation in this House. I do not share the ideas of those who would like to see a smaller Legislative Assembly.

I am of the opinion that the representation from Winnipeg should be increased. One third of the electorate lives in Winnipeg, and it is represented by only ten members in a house of fifty-five. The representation from Winnipeg should be increased in proper proportion to the electorate residing in the city. The demands of the City Council and the Winnipeg people have so far been ignored by the government.

Political Alignments

I WILL now pass to the political alignments and set-up of this House. The alliance between the government and the Social Credit group has already been subjected to considerable adverse criticism. What is the objectionable feature of such an alliance? The principal objection is that the alliance is based on narrow party considerations and purposes.

The Social Credit group entered into an alliance with the Liberals only in order to gain time, knowing that an election will not give them control in the House. The Liberal Party entered the alliance for the selfish reason of maintaining itself as a government. Such an alliance exposes the elements of discreditable capitalist political practices.

I have already stated that in my opinion the election of the Social Credit group to this House is above all a demonstration of sharp protest against present-day conditions, and an expression of the desires of the people for a higher standard of living. In spite of this, I cannot possibly agree with their alliance with the Liberals because of the reasons which motivated it.

I would have no criticism to make to such an alliance if it were based on considerations, purposes and intentions of conducting and leading a struggle to relieve our people from the clutches of the financial morons. An alliance aiming to satisfy the needs of our people, and to halt reaction from making any advances would have my wholehearted support.

Willis Wants Coalition

THE Conservatives object to the present alliance between the Liberals and the Social Credit group. Mr. Willis and his followers would like to unite with the Liberals—that is why he is raising objections.

An alliance between the Conservatives and the Liberals would be dangerous to the people of the province. Such an alliance would free the government to put into operation reactionary conservative policies. The smooth talk and slogans of the Conservatives are only a smoke-screen to cover up their real policy of support for the bankers and financiers. Let me warn Mr. Bracken that there must be no conciliation with reaction,—there must be no peace with it or with its main spokesman, the Conservative Party.

An alliance of the progressive forces and their organizations is required if Manitoba is to be saved for its people. Such an alliance is realizable. There are historical and present-day precedents (France and Spain), where unity of socialist, communist, and genuinely democratic liberals was established against reaction.

Unity Will Force Bracken

ONLY progress can meet the needs of the people. Only decisive progressive measures will prevent the victory of reaction! The road of progress will lessen the burden, and give new life to our people, renewing their hope for a brighter future. The failure to take this road will allow reaction to run rampant in this province. This is the choice that confronts us.

We must choose the road of progress. Let the progressive forces unite. Their unity will compel Mr. Bracken to cut himself loose from any alliances with reaction. The government can be made to depend on the progressive forces.

We can and must reach an understanding. The needs and aspirations of the people unite us all and create a common program. To relieve the people from the power of the bankers, financiers, and mortgage trust companies, to satisfy their most immediate and urgent needs, to combat and defeat reaction—are tasks that unite us all.

Communists Appeal for Unity

WE OF the Communist Party make a special appeal to the C.C.F.-Labor group, to the Social Credit group, and to the honorable Mr. Stubbs, to unite against the threatening enemy.

We live in new times and under new conditions. The present dying and decaying social system tries to save itself by imposing ever greater hardships on the people. New alignments and divisions are created. This requires that old values and old standards be discarded. We must approach problems in a new and realistic fashion. The class struggle today is not a question of simple arithmetical addition and subtraction. The forces on the other side of the line are not all alike, and not all united.

▶ We can and must unite with those who stand for progress. The theories of Tweedledum and Tweedledee do not correspond to the realities of life today. The Winnipeg Tribune states that there is no difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives, with the obvious purpose of deceiving the people into accepting a Liberal-Tory coalition. Such a coalition means reaction.

It is no accident that among those working for such a coalition there is a committee of business men. As usual in such cases, the committee members chose to remain in anonymity.

Proposing unity, we have no intentions of liquidating the Communist Party . . .

Mr. Queen: Maybe you will convince the Liberals to join the Communist Party.

Mr. Litterick: That is not the intention. By unity we do not mean the merging of the parties and organizations. Each party will retain its identity and independence, contributing towards the common tasks established, to the best of its abilities.

The forces of progress are in the labor movement, in the Social Credit movement, and may be found in the ranks of the Liberals. Unity of the progressive forces will pave the way towards the formation of a genuine progressive government that will replace the present Bracken administration.

Communists are Constructive

THERE are people in this House who have perhaps expected to hear a speech resplendent with revolution, force, and violence. Such people have preconceived and prejudiced ideas about the communists. People who state that a communist is a person whose main aim in life is to destroy things, have created such communists out of their own minds,—out of their own evil imagination. Such communists never existed.

We communists are interested in building and creating. We want to build a happy life for the people, and destroy all that is bad, all that causes suffering. We fight for a form of society where classes will be abolished, where there will be no bankers and speculators, no oppressors and oppressed. We communists want to create work for all,—abolish unemployment and its consequent mass starvation and misery.

We want a form of society where everyone will reap the full fruits of his labor. We are striving to abolish poverty and hunger, and make full provisions for our children and youth. A full, happy, and cultured life for all is our aim. We want peace and security.



To free all the resources of nature and science to serve humanity is our goal. Having secured material conditions, we will be able to enjoy full democracy and full freedom. That is what we communists want.

To commence the march on the road of socialism, it will be necessary to uproot capitalism. That task is yet ahead of us.

Life today does not confront us with the immediate choice between capitalism and socialism. But we must not allow our people to suffer, while we idly wait for socialism to come. We can make life easier for our people. We can do something for them now. There are things that are real and need not wait. Slums in Winnipeg are real. Let us destroy them. Let us have new homes built. Let us take steps to end the poverty in the countryside.

We want to eliminate from our province the pinched faces of our children. We want work at decent wages for the unemployed. We want a higher level of wages. We want to give the farmers an opportunity to reap something from the crops they have sown.

We want lower taxes. We want to ease the burden of debts carried by our people. We want democracy and the destruction of reactionary rule. These are the things we can get today. A government united around progressives—placing human needs above all else—can achieve these things. Only the progressives can put forward such a program and only they are able to carry it through.

The realization of such a program is within our grasp. The only thing we lack is unity.

We of the Communist Party say to the C.C.F.-Labor group, to the Social Credit group, and to all progressives: let us unite. This unity will effectively defeat reaction and give us the assurance for a progressive government in Manitoba in the near future.

A Message To You

COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA

MANITOBA PROVINCIAL COMMITTEE

**Room 209, Chambers of Commerce
Winnipeg, Man.**

Dear Friend:

You have read my speech in the Manitoba Legislature, and I hope it helped you greatly towards a better understanding of what our Party, the Communist Party of Canada, proposes.

A stronger Communist Party means a stronger force in the striving for unity, a mightier weapon in the struggle for the needs of our people in the province and in the Dominion.

We cordially invite you to become a member of our Party. Our Party is your Party. It has no other aims or wishes than those that represent the great needs of our people.

Your inquiries for information regarding the activities of our Party will receive our immediate attention.

Yours truly,

J. LITTEKICK, M.L.A., Secretary.

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